



MEPI MEDREGION UPDATE

APRIL 2009

FEMINIST LOBBIES PROJECT

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**FEMINIST LOBBIES
PROJECT 1**

**MOROCCO MEPI NET-
WORK: CARAVAN
FOR YOUNG LEAD-
ERS 2**

**ARAB JOURNALISTS
NETWORK DISCUSSES
MEDIA AND DEMOC-
RACY ISSUES 3**

**YOUTH IN ACTION:
ADVOCATING A VIO-
LENCE-FREE ENVI-
RONMENT 4**

MEPI IN 2009— APPLY FOR A GRANT!

- The Tunis Regional Office has almost \$2 million to support grants in the region.
- Details on how to apply can be found on page three or with your local MEPI committee.
- Make this the year to become involved with your community...and MEPI activities!



The Not to Forget Society held its closing ceremony for the MEPI-funded "Feminist Lobbies" Project in the West Bank city of Jenin. Approximately 100 people attended the event, during which project participants received certificates for their contributions to the program.

During the nine-month pro-

ject, 60 women from the Jenin area and the nearby village of Birqeen received training on civic engagement, planning and lobbying in order to implement independently selected public awareness campaigns and promote feminist issues using local media and lobbying local governing bodies. Upon completion of their training, the

women held educational workshops addressing women's issues, including violence against women, illiteracy, and early marriage. With the help of the local implementer, the Not to Forget Society, the women also arranged meetings with the media and local political leaders to discuss ways to address these problems.

The closing ceremony highlighted MEPI's contribution to the project and emphasized continued collaboration between the U.S. Government and the Palestinian people to improve conditions for women throughout the region.

The MEPI coordinator Shirin Baskey spoke briefly to the audience, commending the project's success in increasing the local visibility of women's issues.



*Not to Forget Society Presenting a Plaque to MEPI
Coordinator Shirin Baskey*

MOROCCO MEPI ALUMNI NETWORK CARAVAN FOR YOUNG LEADERS



Raising awareness in schools around Morocco from North to South about the importance of youth civic engagement, leadership and good citizenship to move towards a better Morocco.

The MEPI Caravan for Young Leaders, a project initiated by the Morocco MEPI Alumni Network visited six different cities in Morocco - Salé, Fez, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech and Agadir - March 13-21, 2009. The Caravan visited over 800 high school students, and introduced them to civil society, and trained them in leadership skills through after-school activities including role playing, games and dramatic works.

THE MEPI CARAVAN FOR YOUNG LEADERS: YOUTH HELPING YOUTH:

The MEPI Caravan for Young Leaders organized two workshops. The first was led by the MEPI Student Leaders and consisted of an introduction to civic engagement through experience sharing and other activities. Students were given a database of civil society organizations that they could join in their commu-

nity. The second workshop was led by a young MEPI alumnus, Mohammed Ennosse, who gave a presentation on leadership and good citizenship and shared his



A play performed by the participants in the Caravan for Young Leaders

Caravan participants and the MEPI Student Leaders worked together during the trip to organize a wide range of teambuilding activities. The participants presented a play that demonstrated all the concepts which were promoted, such as leadership, political participation, civic engagement and mediation.

“OUR MOROCCAN YOUTH OF TOMORROW: LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP”:

On March 21 st, the Caravan concluded with a conference entitled “Our Moroccan youth of Tomorrow: Leadership and Citizenship”. The conference presented the accomplishments of the Caravan Leaders and participants and addressed the obstacles that hinder the advancement of youth in Morocco. Caravan participants were awarded certificates of appreciation for their participation. The MEPI Caravan for Young Leaders was a tremendous success for its organizers and participants, and was recognized by extensive press coverage.

ARAB JOURNALISTS NETWORK DISCUSSES MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY ISSUES



In an attempt to build a strong journalist network across the region of the Middle East and North Africa, the Network of Democrats in the Arab World (NDAW) organized its third workshop hosted by the Al-Wasat Newspaper, which took place in Bahrain January 25-26th, 2009.

The workshop was one of a series of the workshops, held by NDAW and funded by MEPI, aiming to create a network that brings together journalists from different Arab countries to allow them to share experiences and benefit from each other's skills. NDAW believes that their Network Initiative will help protect journal-

ists from prosecution and censorship.

The two-day workshop in Bahrain was marked by the attendance of forty journalists from four Gulf Countries, including women journalists, gathered to discuss democratic transition in the Arab World and how to transform democracy into a cultural concept.

The workshop strengthened cooperation between journalists throughout the Arab world by enhancing their capacity to monitor media violations, combat restrictions on independent media, and protect journalists. Participants discussed steps

that journalists need to take in order to create a network that gathers them together, allows them to communicate, and unites them in facing obstacles. In addition to the Bahrain workshop the Network has carried out other workshops in Cairo and Algiers, and will soon hold a workshop in Jordan in order to assist journalists from

Jordan and Syria. The Jordan workshop will be concluded by a founding conference for this network to adopt a charter, elect a board, and approve an action plan.

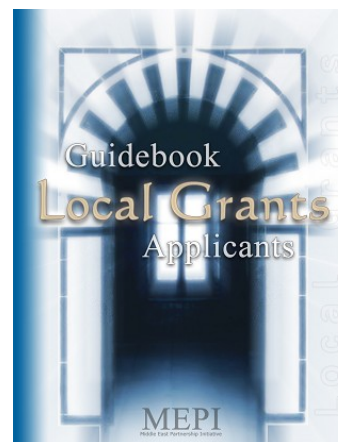
"Network of Democrats in the Arab World (NDAW) was established in January 2006 in Casablanca , Morocco by 63 leading democrats from 14 countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa , to help promulgate democracy forward into the region. NDAW establishes a unified platform for voices of democracy, civil society and good governance in the Middle East and North Africa . The Network's platform integrates Arab intellectuals, opinion makers, political leaders, and civil society activists to work for a real democratic change. NDAW provides support to all democrats in the Arab world. The Network builds unity of purpose, creates strategies within the forces of reform and identifies actions and programs that advance democracy in the region. The Network is the premier regional organization promoting democrats' efforts and initiating programs that stimulate new ideas and projects in the Middle East and North Africa".

www.ndaworld.org

SUBMIT YOUR GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW!

Funding is available now for Local Grants. Please contact your country's US Embassy MEPI Committee and see the guidebook available on our [website](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov) for step-by-step instructions in English, Arabic, or French! *Become a partner for reform.*

www.medregion.mepi.state.gov



YOUTH IN ACTION: ADVOCATING FOR A VIOLENCE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Beirut has re-launched the Youth in Action Project, a MEPI-funded project that addresses the problem of violence through a comprehensive approach that emphasizes awareness-raising among youth in general and their active involvement in advocating for a violence-free environment.

The Youth in Action project targets the students in the 10th and 11th grade in public and private schools in Greater Beirut. The project consists of awareness raising sessions, the election of youth volunteers and advocates, the Youth advocates training workshop, the creation of "Youth in Action" daughter associations and networking through a virtual forums.

The program objectives are to build leadership skills among youth and increase their knowledge of human rights, impact of violence and conflict resolution strategies.

The Youth in Action Project was first launched in the academic year 2007-2008 during

which it reached out to around 600 students, aged between 15 and 17 in six private and public schools, thirty of whom were elected by their fellow students and trained in conflict resolution practices and negotiation skills. The objective was to continue to advocate, in their respective schools and communities, for a life free of violence for all through the formation of Youth in Action Clubs.

In the new academic year 2008/2009, YWCA identified six new private and public schools from different areas of Lebanon. Around 500 students were reached through the awareness sessions implemented. 27 were elected by their fellow students and attended the training sessions in Mid April. YWCA and the Center for Women In Crisis (CWIC) will conduct follow up sessions to discuss the development of the projects. They look forward to the inauguration of six new



Youth in Action Participants

Youth in Action Clubs in May.

As a follow-on step to the training workshop, meetings were held with the groups of students in their corresponding schools to further discuss and structure the different projects in preparation for their implementation following the launch of the Youth in Action school clubs. All six groups in the six different schools showed extensive enthusiasm in the initiation of their school clubs and projects. All

clubs were inaugurated during the month of June 2008 and the projects were presented during the launching day. All projects were conceived, prepared and organized by the students and for the students. All Youth in Action Club members received a certificate of participation. In addition, YWCA/CWIC offered prizes for the best three projects.

MEPI MEDREGION OFFICE

Address: U.S. Embassy

Les Berges du Lac—2045

Tunis, Tunisia

Phone: +216 71 107 058

Fax: + 216 71 107 436

E-mail: mepi-medregion@state.gov

Website: medregion.mepi.state.gov

**Please
Visit our
website**

www.medregion.mepi.state.gov